

Whose Land is It?

Agitation Grows for Restoration of the Soil to the Homeless Many.

The agitation to tax land values is growing. That land monopoly is one of the greatest evils of our day is being recognized by all thinking people. Man is a land animal and he can no more live without it than can a fish without water. Take the land from him and he is dependent upon those who have land. In other words, he is a slave.

Man can no more live without land than he can live without air or water, and it is as "Christian" to monopolize one as the other. The bible, which the land-lords pretend to reverence so highly, tells us that the Lord said: "The land shall not be sold forever. The land is MINE, and ye are but strangers and sojourners here."

If these are the words of the Lord, then when and where and how did it happen that the land-lord slipped into the shoes of the Lord and is now able to say, the land is mine? Get your minister to explain this. You will find it in the 25th chapter of Leviticus. And if he tells you, as a priest once told me, that that part of the bible is obsolete, or out of date, then you may wonder, as I did, since when?

The plan proposed is known as the single tax, or site tax. We voted on this question in Missouri a few years ago, and it was overwhelmingly defeated by the voters who would have been benefited by it. That was because they did not understand it. They got their information from the corrupt controlled press, pulpit and politicians. Hence they were supplied with everything but the truth.

The average man does not understand the difference between land and land VALUES. Land was created by the creator of the universe. Land VALUES are created by the community. High land values are not good for the one who uses the land, be he owner or tenant.

When the question of Land Tax comes up the land-lords scare the little 80-acre farmer with a \$1,000 mortgage on it, almost out of his boots. "They want to confiscate your land," they tell him. The truth is that his taxes would be much less than now. But the land speculator would cease to exist.

The land is in the country, while the land VALUES are in the cities. A single block in St. Louis or Chicago would probably sell for as much as all of Scott county.

The Ground Hog is published in Cleveland, Ohio, in the interest of site or land tax. In its last issue it gave an illustration of the growth of land values in a growing city. At the corner of Fourth and Pike streets, Seattle, Wash., is a lot that sold for \$280 in 1871. That was about the price you would have had to pay for a good corner lot in Sikeston at that time.

There have been but two transfers of the Seattle lot since 1871. It sold in 1873 for \$1,200, and in 1904 for \$150,000. Today this lot is worth \$500,000.

Now get the point. What did the owners do to increase the value of this spot of ground \$499,740 in 41 years? It is exactly the same dirt that once sold for \$1.25 an acre. The owners did not do a thing, except to sit tight, while the community grew into a city of 300,000.

And it is the community value which the people of a community put into land that the single taxers want to tax out of the land for the benefit of the community that created the value.

Is there anything wrong in giving back to the people that which the people created?

This must and will come. But how long it will be in coming depends on how long the masses are in seeing the point.

There is absolutely nothing on which present titles to land are based, except force and robbery, which was later sanctioned by the robbers in what we call law. All peoples are as much entitled to the free use of land as they are to the free use of air and water. All are necessary to life. And if it is right to monopolize one, it is right to monopolize all.

"There is no foundation in nature or natural law, why a set of words upon parchment should convey the dominion of land," says Blackstone.

And who is Blackstone? Why, he is regarded as the greatest authority on English law. Every lawyer must "know Blackstone" before he can be admitted to the bar. Therefore every lawyer is supposed to know that all titles to land are based on force, theft and fraud.

We robbed the Indians of the land on which we now live. Of course we did it in the name of civilization, humanity, God and morality. After we had robbed the Indians we call laws, that should govern the division of the loot. These rules have been concocted and improved upon until

now, when the great mass of people must pay for the privilege of living on the land their ancestors took from the Indians.

If our lawyers and educators were honest, things could not be as they are—for it is they who are responsible for our one-sided laws. The bible clearly forbids the private ownership of land—yet where will you find a minister who does?

Natural law forbids it, and the greatest authority on man-made law tells us there is nothing on which to base private titles to land. But where will you find the lawyer, court or "statesman" to let this fact leak out among the homeless masses?

Below I print a paragraph from Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England. I want you to read it at least twice—and then again. Our laws are copied from England. Says Blackstone:

"There is nothing which so generally strikes the imagination, and engages the attention of mankind, as the right to property; or that sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over the external things of the world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe. And yet there are very few that will give themselves the trouble to consider the origin and foundation of this right. Pleased as we are with the possession, WE SEEM AFRAID TO LOOK BACK TO THE MEANS BY WHICH IT WAS ACQUIRED, as if fearful of some defect in our title; or, at best, we rest satisfied with the decision of the laws in our favor, without examining the reason or authority upon which these laws have been built. We think it enough that our title is derived by the grant of the former proprietor, or by the last will of the dying owner; not caring to reflect that THERE IS NO FOUNDATION IN NATURE OR NATURAL LAW, why a set of words upon parchment should convey the dominion of land."

Let's repeat that last sentence again: There is no foundation in nature or natural law, why a set of words upon parchment should convey the dominion of land. If there be anyone in the country, or anywhere else, who thinks he can successfully defend the present land system, the Kicker will grant him all the space he wants in which to make a fool of himself.

CHRISTIANS AT WORK. From the Melting Pot, St. Louis. The following story has reached this country from India, and is vouched for as true by the Los Angeles Citizen, one of the few papers that, for reasons best known to our Christian ammunition makers who are bossing the powers that be, has seen fit to print it.

English recruiting officers endeavoring to enlist the Hindus to go to Europe and fight the battles of England were met with a flat refusal to do so from four hundred Hindus. They saw no reason why they should travel thousands of miles to shoot or be shot by men whom they had never met and with whom they had no quarrel.

The four hundred were given their choice to join the army of England, or to stand up along a wall and be shot, and at sunrise the next day they gave their lives as a sacrifice to the greed, avarice and cruelty of the nation which had sent them missionaries to teach them Christianity.

The names of these martyrs will never be known to the big world, but their example will live as a power to break down the awful institution of militarism.

Doubtless these four hundred Hindus were Buddhists, whose religion forbade them from shedding human blood. Think of this when the contribution box is passed asking you to donate something to help the Christian missionaries save the wicked heathen.

In Pemiscot county Wm. Smith shot and killed his hired hand, Fred McAdoo. It was given as a reason that McAdoo was intimate with his wife, and public opinion and the law acquitted Smith. Capitalist society has a queer code of morals. A man may kill another, and society will justify the killing, although the man who does the killing, and the man who justifies him, would do exactly the same thing if the opportunity presented itself. Ain't that so? When a woman kills another woman for improper relations with her husband, or perhaps kills the husband, then Mr. Man takes an entirely different view of it.

To pick up an old paper of 60 years ago and read in it advertisements of black men, women and children for sale is quite a curiosity. In 50 years from now it will be quite as great a curiosity to pick up a paper of today and read advertisements of land for sale or rent.

If you want the truth, you must read the unmuzzled Kicker.

CALLED HIM DOWN.

Candidate Hughes has been going over the country "opening the campaign." Instead of a can-opener he uses hot air. He has been making speeches in which he out-Roosevelts Roosevelt, and has been severely criticizing the president. Nothing Mr. Wilson has done suits Mr. Hughes.

But while he severely criticized Mr. Wilson's conduct, Mr. Hughes nowhere dropped a hint as to what it would have been proper to do, or what he would have done under similar circumstances had he been president.

This somewhat disgusted the contributors to the great magazines. Magazine writers are not like the scribblers of the kept press. They want something substantial. They asked Hughes' speeches and could find nothing in them but political bunk. Nowhere could they find where Mr. Hughes stood on any vital question. Hence they became anxious, and 37 of these writers united in addressing a letter to Mr. H., requesting him to please say something. Among other things they say to Mr. Hughes:

"Personalities are without value. Blanket criticism is worthless. What we desire to know is: what is fair that the electorate should know, are the exact details of your disagreement with President Wilson. For example:

"Would you have filed instant protest against the invasion of Belgium and backed up that protest with the United States navy?"

"Would you have urged on congress an embargo upon the shipment of munitions to the allies?"

"Would you urge universal compulsory military service?"

"You are frank in stating that Heurta's morals were of no concern to America. Does this mean that you would have recognized Heurta?"

"As matters stand today, would you be in favor of intervening in Mexico?"

"Does your attack upon the Wilson shipping bill mean that you are in favor of ship subsidies?"

"You speak enthusiastically of the rights of the worker. Does this imply that you endorse the Clayton anti-trust law and the seaman's bill? Or will you urge their repeal?"

"What are your specific complaints against the Federal Reserve Law?"

"As governor of New York you opposed the income tax amendment. Does this antagonism persist? Do you, or do you not, believe in paying for preparedness out of a tax on incomes, inheritance and munitions?"

"We agree with you that it is a 'critical period; by far too critical, indeed, for candidates to talk in terms of office-seeking, rather than in the simple, earnest language of definite Americanism."

AN EASY ONE.

"How are the ultra-Prohibition neighbors of the ultra-Prohibition type going to vote?"—Ironton Register

That's easy. They are going to vote just the same as your ultra-Democratic neighbors—the same ticket as the brewers, distillers and saloon keepers.

Can't you give us a nut to crack that hasn't already got the shell off, Bro. Ake.

Perhaps the best organized political machines outside the cities are in Dunklin and Pemiscot counties. Any desired result can be obtained. In the recent primary Harry Alexander of Cape Girardeau was a candidate for the Democratic ticket, against a Dunklin county man. There are seven counties in that senatorial district. According to the Cape Tribune, Alexander carried six of the seven counties. But he didn't get Dunklin, and the Dunklin man won. Six years ago Marsh Arnold ran against C. B. Faris, of Caruthersville, for the Democratic nomination for circuit judge. There were then five counties in that circuit. Arnold, and the Pemiscot man won. Either Dunklin or Pemiscot county can produce from 500 to 1,500 more Democratic votes in a primary than at a general election—when the occasion requires.

The Portageville Missourian tells of 18 crap-shooters being rounded up and fined one dollar and costs each. The town got the dollar and the officers got six dollars in each case. Of course the victims were all poor devils. After the officers had skinned their prey, probably they rolled the bones to see who should have it all. It reminds me of the way the officers confiscate the booze they find on boot-leggers. One would have to have more confidence in officialdom than I have to believe they pour it out on the ground. More probably they pour it down their throats.

A fight similar to the one in Scott county was on before the county court of Cape county to abolish the farm adviser. A petition signed by over six hundred tax-payers was presented asking that the matter be submitted to a vote. There, as here, it was held that there is no law to authorize a vote. The people up there have also petitioned for a vote to abolish the highway engineer. The people here did vote to abolish the highway engineer, but they have never been able to discover that their voting it out did any good.

ABOUT THE WAR. Well, we are in the third year of the horrible European murder-fest, and they seem no nearer a settlement than when they began. First one side seems to have the advantage and then the other—depending on who sends out the war news.

And what is it all about? You have read page after page of the story, and have you been able to discover anything in it except greed for power and plunder?

But there is one noticeable change since the beginning. At the outbreak of this war all of the rulers told us that it was God's work, and that they were only the instruments through which God would work his will. Not only the rulers, but also their high priests, made the same blasphemous assertion.

That sort of puff worked all right during the black night of the dark ages, but too many people are thinking now. However, even now, a cave man sometimes gets up in his pulpit and yawns: "The powers that be are ordained of God."

Since the European war began, some fifteen million men have been killed, crippled or taken as prisoners. These people are of the working class. These men have wives, mothers, sisters, sweet-hearts. All of these suffer.

But say, Rubes, how many kings, Kaisers, Czars, Sultans and other war-lords are responsible for all this have been either killed, crippled or taken prisoner? Have you heard of one? If you have not, then it must be a rich man's quarrel and a poor man's fight.

An dth is what you will probably vote for again this fall. Both old parties have declared for preparedness, which means militarism. Those in power in any country are always very patriotic—but not quite enough to shoulder a gun. They enact laws that compel Rubes to do that.

Some twenty years ago a bill was slipped through congress known as the Dick military law. Not even the congressmen who voted for it knew what it meant. Nor did they care. And the people who are supposed to rule in this "free" country don't understand it yet.

But some of the sap-heads who thought they would look "patriotic" in army uniform got a whiff of its meaning. In Texas and in several other states the guardsmen refused to take the oath as national troops. They thought they had only enlisted to do duty within the state—a sort of police duty to break strikes. But the Dick law automatically makes them subject to the call of the president. And ignorance of law is no excuse for a Rubes.

But the present congress has gone the whole hog. It has given us conscription. The law don't read that way, but that is what it will be interpreted to mean. The bill has been signed by the president and is now law. It provides for the DRAFT of the "unorganized militia."

And what is the unorganized militia? I'll bet you couldn't guess in six months. It means every able-bodied male citizen between the ages of 18 and 45 not already in the service.

In England under a king, they had fierce riots when parliament enacted conscription after two years of war. Here in this country where "the people" rule, we slip it through and nobody knows it.

It takes the Democrats to do the dirty work that the Republicans are afraid to do. While they were out of power the Democrats were anti-militarists. Do you remember how they pictured Roosevelt with cannons sticking out of his mouth, eyes, nose and ears—indicating that he is a war-lord?

This war measure passed by a Democratic congress and signed by a Democratic president, provides for a large standing army, and also provides for "reserve battalions from which to fill up the gaps in the regular army. Then, in section 79, the law goes on:

"If for any reason there shall not be enough voluntary enlistments to keep the reserve battalions at the prescribed strength a sufficient number of the UN-ORGANIZED MILITIA shall be DRAFTED into the service of the United States to maintain each of such battalions at the proper strength."

Just vote 'er straight, Rubes. If you voted for what you want you might lose your vote. Give the plutes more power and it won't be long until you will be as happy as were the peons of Mexico before their rebellion.

President Wilson and his party are backing the largest military appropriation bills ever put through congress in times of peace—and Mr. Hughes and his party are criticizing the Democrats because they are not larger.

The proposed appropriation amounts to approximately seven hundred million dollars—or seven dollars for every man, woman and child of the nation. The New York World puts it in terms of wheat, and says that it means more than two-thirds of the annual wheat crop of the nation. Think of two-thirds of the wheat crop being wasted on militarism while millions suffer for food.

The Kicker prints what other papers must suppress—or move.

HOW TO GET THE TRUTH.

Mr. Voter, do you want to cast an intelligent ballot this fall? Of course you do, and you cannot vote intelligently unless you know the truth.

Let me tell you how to get the truth—a sure shot!

If you are a Democrat, don't let a Democratic paper come into your house. Subscribe for a rabid Republican paper and believe all it says about the Democrats—and you will have the truth. But don't believe anything it says about the Republicans.

If you hear of a Republican speaking, go hear it and put down as gospel truth all the spell-binding words about the crooked Democrats. But don't believe a word he says about the good, honest Republicans.

If you are a Republican, reverse the above plan, and in a little while you may reach a point where you are able to think. Having reached that point, you cannot avoid the conclusion that one is as crooked as the other.

The old party politicians know this. That is why you never hear of them meeting in debate. They know that to meet in debate would lift a cover and let the people see that there is nothing to their bunk.

PUNK BUNK. Where is the empty dinner pail? Well, we are pleased to say the Democratic party has made it an unknown thing to Americans—Poplar Bluff Citizen.

This is the sort of puff that readers of old party papers will be fed upon until November.

Did the Democratic party bring on the European war? Everybody, but Democratic editors, knows that whatever prosperity we have is due to the European demand for our products.

But who is reaping the harvest? Surely it does not help very many because the steel trust distributed among its stockholders eighty million dollars in dividends in three months.

Is labor prosperous? If so, then why so many strikes in every part of the nation? Wages have not kept pace with the increased cost of living.

It is true that the labor market is not crowded as it was three years ago. That is because of hundreds of thousands of foreign laborers being called home by their government to fight.

What had the Democratic party, or the Republican party, to do with that? Both stand for exactly the same system—and no relief can come to the working class until that system is destroyed.

Spurts of steady work and temporary prosperity may come now and then, but in the end the majority die as poor as they were born.

Press reports say that Roosevelt will take the stump for Hughes. What would crazy horse say if someone should ask him what he meant when he said that the "difference" between Hughes and Wilson could be removed by any barber in ten minutes? But that was said before the nominating convention. A politician is not to be responsible for what he says after it gets cold.

Well, he is with us again to remain until November. I mean that life-long Democrat who is going to vote for Hughes, and the life-long Republican who is going to vote for Wilson. For particulars see any old party organ.

WHERE WE ARE AT. I would be very thankful if the wise ones would explain what we have for a national congress and state legislature.

What service do they perform except to consume the people's money? The courts have usurped the power to nullify their acts—then why not abolish these expensive pretenses of a government of and by the people and admit the truth?

What is the truth? Why, the unvarnished truth is, that we live under an irresponsible despotism, with federal judges, not elected by the people, in possession of the despotic power.

What does it matter what kind of laws your so-called representatives in congress or state legislatures may enact, so long as the courts of the privileged class may nullify them?

In the first place, your so-called representatives are not likely to enact any law that is of benefit to the masses, except under extreme pressure of an aroused people. And even then the proposed measure is emasculated and filled with "jokers" so that the law often works the reverse of what the people wanted.

Take, for instance, your anti-trust laws. When the Sherman anti-trust law was enacted, every body thought we would hold the big trusts now; and nobody ever dreamed that this law would be twisted so as to apply effectively to organized labor—the "labor trust," as the courts have declared it. But it has been applied effectively nowhere else.

Why not remove the sham and hypocrisy and look at things as they are? What use have we for law-makers whose laws are of no effect unless approved by the federal judges appointed by the powers of plutocracy?

WHAT FOR? There are now about 100,000 of our troops at the Mexican border, and the war department is arranging to send 35,000 more as soon as they can be had.

What for? Secretary of War Baker is quoted as saying that "the sending of the troops to the border has no more relation to any Mexican problem than your breakfast has to my physical condition."

Yet he gives no reason why all these soldiers are in Texas. Looks like the people who foot the bills ought to be given a little light for their money.

If militarism is such an honorable and glorious thing as our rulers tell us it is, then why are they so secret about it? Anything that is honorable and just does not need the cover of secrecy. Yet the masses are not permitted to know the truth until they are ordered out to kill or be killed.

The rulers even deny that the boy scout movement is a part of their military program. They know that if it were generally understood that the boys were being prepared for cannon fodder, the mothers would object. Hence, to more completely disguise their purpose, the church is used as a recruiting station for the boys.

I was at the armory in St. Louis when the troops were mobilizing to go to the border in June. And the sight I saw there impressed me. Foolish young men had allowed themselves to be enticed to enlist. Mothers, wives, sisters, and sweet-hearts were weeping. One young mother with a babe in her arms and two tugging at her skirts was the most pathetic scene I saw. The husband and father was being taken from them by the government. All were of the working class. It was easy to tell this by their clothes. No bejeweled "dames" in silks fanned as reporters where the sons of the rich join the army for active service, but you can find no trace of them in the ranks.

I was talking to Editor Hoehn of St. Louis Labor when a boy of about 14 years came toward us in army uniform. He was dressed just like the other soldiers, but I could not believe that a lad so young would be accepted into the service.

"What is that?" I inquired of Editor Hoehn in astonishment.

Editor Hoehn smiled as he replied: "That is the contribution of the church to militarism—a boy scout."

We walked out of the armory. Just across the street was a massive stone church with stained windows and sky-invading steeples, supposedly built as a place in which to worship the Prince of Peace. I called the editor's attention to the inconsistency of an armory on one side of the street and a Christian church on the other.

"Only one thing is lacking to make the scene completely capitalistic," replied the editor.

"What's that?" I insisted.

"The saloon. There is no saloon in the block."

WHEN THE MASS MOVES. The real, the most dynamic force that is destined to bring about an increased measure of life and happiness to all is the movement of the masses themselves.

Any reforms which we may achieve, the social and economic justice toward which we are striving, the equality of opportunity which should be the right and heritage of every child born into the world, must come from the masses. The people themselves are the life-giving force of society. It is they who must act and dare and do. The movement for social achievement and happiness is greater than any foundation or any government.

Behind each organization that sets before itself the task of adding to the sum total of social well-being is always the stirring sea of public action and sentiments; a sea which knows no bounds recognizes no "isms" as the last word on truth and justice and which carries all so-called great men like so many whitecaps on the crest of the waves. It is this all-embracing movement of the masses which is the supreme dictator of modern life and to which the will of every individual, however great, must bend if the bending of that will be necessary to the welfare of the social whole.—Frank P. Walsh.

Read the unmuzzled Kicker.

SOCIALISM AND EQUALITY. By John Spargo.

No Socialist wants to pull down the strong to the level of the weak, the wise to the level of the less wise. Socialism does not imply pulling anybody down. It does not imply a great plain of humanity with no mountain peaks of genius or character. It is not opposed to natural inequalities, but to man-made inequalities. Its only protest is against these artificial inequalities, products of man's ignorance and greed. It does not aim to pull down the highest, but to lift up the lowest; it does not want to put a load of disadvantage upon the strong and gifted, but it wants to take off the heavy burdens of disadvantage which keep others from rising. In a word, socialism implies nothing more than giving every child born into the world equal opportunities, so that only the inequalities of nature remain.

SEEKING THE CAUSE. At least some of the law-making bodies have tired of piddling with results and are going after the cause. And when they do this they find just what the Socialists have been telling them. Two years ago the Illinois legislature appointed a vice commission to locate, if it could, the cause of prostitution among working girls. That commission has made its report.

That poverty is the principal cause, direct and indirect, of immorality, is the first and most strongly emphasized finding of the commission.

Industrial oppression of the helpless is declared by the report to be directly responsible for a large part of existing immorality. Thousands of girls, it says, are driven into immorality "because of the sheer inability to keep body and soul together on the low wages received by them."

"Unregulated conditions of domestic employment, uncertain hours, absence of definite social status and lack of creative opportunities render the home, in many cases, for the woman servants, a breeding place for immorality," continues the committee's finding.

Extensive investigations conducted by the committee, the report says, disclosed the fact that more women of the underworld fall into disfavor from domestic employment than from any other work. Of 181 girls sent to the state training school at Geneva, Ill., who had worked for a wage previous to commitment, the committee found that 115, or 63.55 per cent, had been engaged in domestic service.

The occupation proved by actual statistics to be productive of most prostitution is also the occupation a girl most shuns, says the report. In this manner the committee accounts for the constant unfiled demand for domestics.

Eight dollars a week is fixed by the committee as the least amount that will meet the necessary items of a bare living for a girl employed in a large city.

The report says wages were found to be discouragingly short of this figure. Attention is called to testimony taken by the committee of wages running as low as \$2 a week; of foremen who profanely abused girls in short dresses shaking them until their arms are blackened, and occasionally hurl boxes at them; and of the manager who found his factory besieged with the agents of professional white slavers.

WHY DON'T YOU THINK? Say, you just don't know what a real it is to THINK. Some of you who just keep on voting the old party tickets just cause pain and ought to cultivate the habit. Most of you really believe that you do think. But you don't. You just rehash what some other fellow has put in your noodle—what you read or heard someone else say. Your ideas are all second-hand—or worse. A new idea would jar you severely. That is why we're today struggling along under the old laws and customs of centuries ago. According to your idea, all the wisdom existed in the past—and we must never do anything unless there is a precedent.

There is nothing new under the sun, you say, as you observe the men in air-ships flying above the clouds. And as you listen to the talking machine or read of wireless telegraphy you console yourself with, "What always has been always will be."

Don't think. It is dangerous—for those who are riding you. It might shake that large store of contentment you have been taught to cherish so dearly. You might become a rebel against the existing order of things. They who are on your back would like that. As a boy I remember how systematically it was funneled into me not to try to think outside the well-beaten path—to shun free thought and free thinkers!

A free thinker is the worst evil. Why he is one of those awful, un-Godly cusses who actually uses the brains that God gave him to use. He considers himself free to think for himself. Of course that won't do. You must listen to the fellows who have you saddled and bridled—sorter make a fashion. However, the mule sometimes kicks. But you don't. That is where the mule has one on you.

Mental slavery is the strongest weapon of the ruling class. So long as they can control your thinking apparatus they've got you faded. It beats bullets—and is so much more polite—and cheaper.

The generals and other officers of the army could not handle fourteen million voters with the most improved war machinery. But your editors and educators can do it with printers' ink and hot air—and you hardly notice it.

NOT WITHOUT AVAIL. From Case and Comment.

"Peter Cooper, stand up!" The raw-boned "poor white trash," holding his ragged hat in one hand and the tail of a shabby coat in the other walked slowly up to the stand.

"Yes, Judge."

"You are accused of profanity in a public place."

"I guess I did it, Judge. Nigger was trying to steal my horse."

"But you should know better than to take the name of the Lord in vain, Mr. Cooper."

"It wasn't in vain, Judge. You jes ought ter have seen that nigger run!"